27 Sept 63

Complete Ms. of I.8, arrives from Denis

Fri Sept 27th 1963

Northwick Lodge Harrow-on-the-Hill
Middlesex
England

Dearest René

I had written or half-written a long meandering letter to you but decided to start again, having just received your parcel with that Desmond correspondence in it. Thank you for sending it to me. No, I'm glad you had a look at it & found it of interest. I've just had a short look at it but couldn't read it properly as it seemed a weary going over of obvious points. & the remembrance of the sweat of writing it all got me down. But it was jolly nice of him to want to know & take all the trouble he did & better still that he really did *like* it. I agree about the questions touching 'prosody' are a bore. It's a curious thing these chaps have. I remember having a *charming* letter from Laurie Binyon, in appreciation of *In Paren.*; but which asked *all sorts* of questions as to why I changed from dactylic rhythm here to something or other else there & then to lines that covered be — I don't know, something else, well, I felt almost ashamed to say that I didn't know I had! — It is, as you say merely a question of ~~[illegible]~~ making the bloody thing as you want it to be — so that the 'form' follows the 'content' &, as you say, you bloody well *know* if it's right or wrong, that is you know if it fits with what you intend — *of course*, what you intend may be all balls, but that's another matter. But I find it is incredibly hard to convince chaps of this. They somehow won't believe that that's how one works.

By a strange coincidence the same post that brought your ~~parcel~~ packet from Munster, brought also a very large packet which I couldn't imagine the contents of. It turns out to be from Denis with a complete MS of *In Paren.* And it appears to be the one from which the typescript was made ~~ff~~ which you used in setting up the

I see that place Passage is very near Waterford. it reminds me of (see John O'Connor's story) *"The Croppy Boy"* 'at Passage they have his body laid'.

thing in type. Damned odd looking at it now in that form. It tells me an interesting thing that I was very surprised about. At the conclusion of Part VII. It says "finished at Pigotts Aug 18 1932." The notes & preface were written mainly at Sidmouth ~~&~~ in 1935 — that I knew, but I thought I did bits of ~~the~~ text between 1932 & 1935. However, that's what it says. Do you remember me going in 1936 to see old Dicky de la M. ~~and~~ wondering if they could be persuaded to print the thing in long columns like a newspaper, in 'Joanna' type face — what a hope! — but actually it would have been jolly nice. What a changed world. Think of Fabers now. We dealt only with Dicky & now — well even when The Anathemata was published one dealt with at least half a dozen different chaps. I used to 'phone up and say "Concerning I spoke to Miss X, I want to amend a correction on proof Z" and they would say "Oh, I think that's passed out Miss P.'s hands now — no, wait a minute, I ~~think~~ I'll get you Mr K., no, Mr G., he might know."

I do hope your throat is better. I hope that doctor who looks like Bobby S. disguised as a Hebrew is O.K. as a doctor.

Yes, I bet those places, Dungarvan & ~~Wexford~~ Waterford are marvellous. There's something peculiar moving about places where shipping & the sea come into immediate contact with the things of the land — there was still a whiff of it at Bristol I remember where masts of ships & tramcars were all mixed up. And in quite another & nicer sort of way there were places (I ~~[illegible]~~ saw when I was to stay at Helen S's in Northumberland*). on the south-east coast of Scotland between Berwick and

* "I think we'll drive to so&so, we'll make an early start & walk from so & so" Oh God! a bloody route march & no rum ration! But it was heavenly country — all that part to where Conty Sitwell was to live — almost on Flodden Field.

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Edinburgh – fishing villages where the country & very strong quiet stone houses with stone steps on the outside walls & masts & tackle of small ships ~~were~~ were all intermeddled & enormous nets spread out to dry.

Yes, I've often wondered about those tall round towers in Ireland – I never saw one, but from reading about them & looking at photographs of 'em I've always thought them very peculiar as places of refuge to be defended – hopeless, I should have thought. Give me a bloody trench & a

Like a fool I had not realised that when in yr first letter you spoke of the de Paor book it was that one on *Early Xtian Ireland*. Of course they talk about all that connection between Egypt & Lérins & the Celtic Church, that I foolishly meandered on about in my letter. I've read, from time to time, so *many* different books of sorts about all that Celtic stuff that I get them muddled up. I found my copy of *Early Xtian Ireland* (after a bit of a search!) & see there's a map on p. 51, showing Ardmore & Cloyne – you must be about when I first asked, about half way between the two. I was going by a map in that Nelson *Atlas of the Early Xtian World* by those Dutch chaps F. van der Meer & Christine Mohrmann – it's a *marvellous* book, but the map showing Cloyne & Ardmore is small scale & covers the area from North Scotland to Carthage, & the positions of Cloyne and Ardmore are not quite accurate, as Cloyne looks as if it was where Cork now is & Ardmore looks as if it were where Gyleen now is; but it's because of the small scale really. I expect. There is another map showing

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2

But I do think, in a general sort of way, that maps need to be very accurate – & I think in all sorts of books there ought to be a lot more maps, much clearer & better than is normally the case.

with great clarity how from the Thebaid & the Nile Delta, these Egyptian-type monasteries spread north-west across the Mediterranean to the Islands of Lérins and north-east to Cappodocia & the Bosphorus. & south to Ethiopia (you no spikka de Hobyssinia! — do you remember ~~[illegible]~~ Mick. Richey's war-time jokko?) It also marks a big Egyptian-type monastic community at a place called Primuliacum which looks on the map as if it was where Perpignan now is. And ~~[illegible]~~ it marks a place called ~~Caesa~~ Caesaraugusta where Saragossa now is & says that in 380 a synod there forbade the Hispanic priests to become monks. So the old contest between 'seculars' & 'religious' was already well under weigh.

I suppose that's a straight case of fr Latin ~~[illegible]~~ into Spanish? But wonder about Primuliacum & Perpignan. I suppose it comes to the same, after all ~~[illegible]~~. Lugdunum became Leyden in the Netherlands & Lyons in southern France.

I think there is a hell of a lot yet to be sorted out about all this Celtic Church monasticism. It's bloody complicated, as the more one goes into it the more complicated it gets. ~~We~~ have (speak for y'rself.') been sentimental about it. It was a strange mixture (like most things) of wonderfulness & things pretty unlikeable too. I've most of my life felt that in all that Roman-Celtic squabble — I mean in these islands — the Augustinian mission & the affair at Whitby & stacks of later stuff to do with Wales, that the Celtic boys were far to be preferred & that the Roman boys were just being bloody — authoritarian, legalistic, horrible, & so on — & I think they were too, but the Celtic ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ set-up was pretty odd. For this extreme ~~[illegible]~~ zeal & asceticism they seem very quickly to become caught up in a tradition of

This is what Prudence used always to say to me ~~if~~ she affirmed something as if it were generally accepted.

⑤

ruling sacral families. Within a few centuries of Dubricius, (mid-late 5th Cent.) Illtud c. 480 – c. 530. David, Gildas, Patrick, Samson, Cadog, Beuno, Trillo, etc etc, all ~~[illegible]~~ overlapping each other ~~in~~ during the 5th & 6th Centuries their essentially monastic foundations became quite openly and acceptedly 'hereditary'. We talk about the nepotism of Renaissance cardinals & popes, but as far as I can make out 'nepotism' in a wide sense was taken for granted in that utterly different wild, war-like society of the Celtic west. And later, certainly by the 10th Cent, it would appear that celibacy itself went.

It's hard to think of anything more poles apart than the Weltanschauung of that ~~[illegible]~~ Celtic set-up & that of 18th & 19th Cent. England, yet as far as ecclesiastical rule & preferment went there was a similarity – I mean you didn't stand a dog's chance of being an archdeacon or a bishop or even a rector in the Establishment unless you had ~~some sort of~~ certain connections & influences, ~~had~~ and given the utterly different circumstances etc, of that far-away Celtic church a not dissimilar state of affairs seems to have existed. Perhaps it was inevitable & the only chaps capable of running the show were of the same ~~[illegible]~~ 'cast' as the tribal leaders and rulers of petty kingships.

The muddle in my mind comes about because of this 'monastic', abbatial, as opposed episcopal organism.

As the de Paor book points out P.P. 47-8. ~~[illegible]~~ when Patrick, a Romano-Briton went to Ireland he organized the church on a basis of territorial bishopricks, and that of course, must have been the organization of Roman-Britain. After all, the provinces of Britain had been more or less ~~[illegible]~~ Xtian ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible] Edict of Milan~~ during the last hundred years ~~or more~~ of direct Roman rule – when was the Edict of Milan? – ~~[illegible]~~ early in the 4th Cent. ~~& after the [illegible] of Julian the Apostate~~, anyway, with a few ups & downs, Britain ~~[illegible]~~ during the second half of the 4th Cent was officially Xtian – and long before that in the persecution under ~~[illegible]~~ Diocletian, emperor ~~[illegible]~~ from 284 to about 307, Isaac ~~[illegible]~~ & Julian of Caerleon-on-Usk were martyred as well as Alban at Verulamium. I meander, sorry. Anyway it would appear that this monastic type of church took on during the growing

Even as early as Illtud, this 'family' thing seems to have been a danger, for at Illtud's great monastery at Llantwit Major, he had a nephew who appeared to ~~think~~ that he would become abbot when his uncle died. But when St Samson joined the community & his greatness & holiness became apparent, so that he seemed the most likely successor to the office of abbot, this nephew with the help of his brother, tried to poison Samson, but failed. Samson then went to Piro's monastery on Caldey (called Ynys Bŷr after Piro) & Samson succeeded him as abbot there, before (after various vissisitudes), becoming Bishop of Dol in Brittany.

Incidentally while Samson was Abbot of Caldey he went to Ireland & founded a place called Bally Samson very near Waterford – ~~[illegible]~~ does it still survive as a place-name? ~~[illegible]~~

Also seven of the eight abbots of Iona & ~~[illegible]~~ foundations springing from it were of the family of St Columba. I think all of this was largely due to the fact that these ruling families were, generally speaking, ~~who~~ the chaps most capable of ~~[illegible]~~ being able to cope in either the secular or religious sphere. Because it must have required enormous power or command to get anything done at all.

chaos in Britain in the 5th Cent. But in Wales, as opposed to Ireland, later on, the Bishop remained the predominant figure, even though the organization was, as in Ireland, essentially monastic. At first fantastically ascetical,* penitential to the highest degree & chiefly seeking out solitary places to live not coenobitical but eremitical lives. "Well, there once dwelt a local ~~[illegible]~~ heremite, Michael Arklow was his riverend name, (with many a sigh I aspersed his lavabibs!) and one venersderg in ~~[illegible]~~ juno-july, oso sweet and so cool and so limber she looked, Nance the Nixie, Nanon L'Escaut, in the silence, of the sycomores, all listening, the kindling curves you simply can't stop feeling, he ~~plunged~~ plunged both his newly anointed hands the core of his cushlas in her singimari saffron strumens of hair, parting them and soothing her and mingling it, that was deep-dark and ample like this red bog at sundown." Thus the incomparable Joyce, in Anna Livia, packed quite a bit of what actually happened to this early ascetical & eremitical zeal.

* St David would not allow horses or oxen to pull the ploughs. The monks had to do it themselves. No meat at all & only water to drink. There is a fragment, which they think was written by Gildas, himself ascetical enough, but which expresses fear that David is going a bit too far. And that's another interesting thing, Gildas was ~~[illegible]~~ predominantly for this monastic thing, yet he was utterly Roman, and moaned & cracked on all the time about the virtues of the Romans & the depravity of his countrymen. What that chap could have told us, if he'd given contemporary facts instead of the most boring bloody sermon – it's tragic.

For if the hereditary principle of the monastic Celtic communities was established by the say 8th Cent. or before, ~~the~~ celibacy went by the ~~[illegible]~~ 10th century, (I'm speaking of Wales), you get 'dynasties' of ~~the~~ bishop-abbots or abbot-bishops. For example a chap called Salian, Bishop of St Davids, I forget ~~his~~ exact dates, but roughly about 1010 to ~~[illegible]~~ 1090 he lived. He studied in Ireland for over ten years & then Scotland for some years, had an enormous reputation for learning & goodness. He had four sons, one of whom Rhygyfarch (called Ricemarchus in Latin documents), wrote a Life of St David, he was a priest at St David's and his son also called Julien was with the monastic community at Llanbadarn Fawr (where Aberystwyth now is) And in charters of various sorts ~~sorts charters signed themselves 'So & so, [illegible]~~ ecclesiastics signed themselves 'So & So, son of the Bishop So & So.'"

True the celibacy of the secular clergy was not (I think) pressed by Rome until some time in the 11th Century. I don't know, ~~[illegible]~~ but I suppose secular priests were married in

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Anglo-Saxon England. After the ~~[illegible]~~ Augustinian mission to Kent in 597 and the Synod of Whitby in 664 and the gradual organisation of the English church on the Roman pattern with territorial dioceses I imagine the division between secular clergy under the Ordinary of the Diocese and the communities of religious became separated out, as now. But in Wales, as far as I can make out there never was a 'secular clergy' — because all the little churches scattered over the country were 'mission churches' established from these big monastic establishments such as Llan Illtud Fawr in the south & Bangor Fawr yn Arfon* in the north and Llan Badarn Fawr where Aberystwyth now is and various other centres. They called these 'mother churches', classau singular class from Lat. classis. I believe the same ~~term~~ term was used in Ireland, at all events at one period — just as was bangor. Llan, bangor, class to all intents & purposes meant roughly the same thing, I don't mean etymologically, but in practice. i.e. an enclosure where chaps lived to a rule, studied, worked the land, practiced their various ascetical & penitential ways ~~[illegible]~~. & from these centres went out some as hermits, some as perigrini, some as founders of smaller llanau that accounts for the incredible number of place-names being with llan- in Wales — for in the end it came to ~~mean~~ be equated with eglwys, church.

In Wales, as opposed to Ireland, the Bishop retained the predominant position — but the abbatial organisation was nevertheless much the same. You had bishop-~~ab~~ abbots or abbot-bishops — and the exactly defined territorial area of the Bishops seem to have been pretty vague until much later.

So that when this 'hereditary' i.e. in the family business became established, and, some centuries later, still celibacy itself was abandoned, it is no wonder that ~~the~~ those Norman bastards, when they penetrated into Wales before the end of the 11th Century, were genuinely surprised to find communities of 'religious' married & with their families. I don't mean that they were 'shocked', but found it a very odd & unfamiliar state of affairs. Had ~~they~~ they (these Welsh clerics I mean) been seculars

* Now Bangor, but the full name is still used by some Welshmen. It means merely The big bangor in the province of Arvon, & Arfon means of the ~~land~~ area over against or facing Môn, Anglesey. ar means 'on', but is used also in innumerable senses, at, in, during etc in fact; *fifteen ~~[illegible]~~ It corresponds with Old Irish for which comes from some common ~~[illegible]~~ Celtic form which ~~[illegible]~~ equates with Latin super, its the basic meaning is 'on'.

* with half a dozen added coming from another root although and in Old Irish air meaning 'in front', ~~[illegible]~~ 'before'. Yes, I'm wrong about Arfon, that comes from this other meaning (Irish air) not 'on' but 'in front of'. Sorry.

Then the Normans would ~~surely~~ have taken that for granted, but for communities of religious, it must have seemed to them most irregular. Thus Giraldus, a hundred years after the Norman Conquest of England, describes how the canons of St Davids, though greatly ~~proud~~ proud of their direct line from the class* of ascetical coenobites established there by St David six centuries before, were living openly & by accepted custom, with their wives & families in the Cathedral precincts.

One can see that to a Norman or Angevin this would appear an extraordinary state of affairs. Had it been just a matter of mistresses & laxity that, no doubt, would have been familiar enough to them, but as an established & respectable usage it must have seemed odd.

At two places only, Beddgelert & on Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island, off the tip of the Llŷn peninsular) as far as is known, was the old, strictly ascetical, contemplative, 'labour & prayer' life continued without cessation still on into the 13th Cent. There are indications that elsewhere there were a number of 'solitaries' but nothing is known of them for certain.

With the coming of the Cistercians (almost all the medieval religious houses in Wales were Cistercian – the Welsh took to them & the later Welsh princes patronized them & gave them land and places such as Strata Florida, became genuinely Welsh, with native abbots & monks & so suffered the vengeance of English invading armies. Later the Franciscans too were liked, and they too became genuinely – what's the bloody word? – but nativized to a large extent. They too suffered in consequence, but by that time we are drawing near to the end of Welsh independence – or partial independence.

The awful thing (for anyone interested in or with a love for the Welsh past) is that there is nothing virtually nothing, of all that marvellous expression of Celtic art which visibly shows the feeling of the Celtic resurgence in the

* the word, by the way, has come down into our times, though the thing disappeared in the middle-ages. My aunt, that I used to stay with when I was a little boy in North Wales, lived in a house called 'Glasdir' and I remember her explaining to me that in English it would be 'Glebeland'. Of course I knew nothing about the Welsh language then. But she was dead right. There would have been a definite article, Y, and that would make class become glass and tir (land) dir, because when you put the adjective (class) before the noun and before the definite article, it mutates the initial consonants. The 'normal' syntax would be Y tir class the land (belonging to) the church-enclosure, so ~~subject~~ glebe-land, the property of the parish-church.

You know that place at Capel we called The Darren; well, that's an interesting example of this mutation business passing into another language. Tarren means a knoll or tump or some sort of hill, and happens to be a feminine noun, and fem. nouns, singular, are subject to the soft mutation after the definite article so it becomes Y Darren, The Knoll. The odd thing is that feminine nouns plural remain in their radical form so The Knolls, or the Tumps would be Y tarrenni and the accent would move forward onto the syllable ren, tárren, tarrénni.

But the place we called 'The Dole' doesn't quite work, it is dôl meadow, also feminine noun, so would be Y ddôl (pron., more or less, 'thole', well, obviously you can't say it easily, the thole in English.

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5th, 6th 7th & 8th Centuries. There are indeed a number of stone shaft-crosses with interlaced patterns, but very inferior to those in Ireland or north Britain.* Of course all the buildings were of wood and so have utterly disappeared, but one would have hoped that with modern scientific excavation of sites, ~~both~~ some ~~ro~~ royal and ecclesiastical, something would have been found. But, no. It is a complete mystery to me how ~~in~~ in the immediately sub-Roman period in Britain, ~~such as~~ such as the site of the court of Maelgwn Gwynedd — one of the kings castigated by that maddening old bore, Gildas, his contemporary, no evidence has come to light of any continuation of Roman stone-construction, yet Maelgwn was of the line of Cunedda, very much a Romano-Briton & after all, the Roman occupation had lasted four centuries. Moreover it is now known that chalks came by sea from Tours to North Wales God knows why. & the cult of St Martin of Tours was considerable. I believe Candida Casa was dedicated to him. That was founded soon after 400 AD by Nyniaw (Ninnian) he's thought to have gone there fr N.E. Wales, but they are not certain. & appears to have been the only stone building erected by the sub-Roman Britons, as Bede noticed, three centuries later. I see on page 50 of the de Paor book there is mention of an Irish saint, Enda, going to Candida Casa in South Scotland to study. & on the same page mention of Finnian after studying with 'Cadoc of Llancarvan' in Glamorganshire, went back & made the episcopal church at Clonard into a monastic church. So though the Welsh retained the primacy of bishops over abbots, it looks as if the impetus toward monastic foundations came from the Britons — Cadog was of the generation before David ~~&~~ & was either Iltud said to ~~[illegible]~~ have studied under Germanus of Auxerre & moreover the vale of Glamorgan was the most thoroughly Romanised

* and not a vestige of anything like the Kells book or the Lindisfarne Gospels, which though Angel was obviously under Irish-Celtic inspiration. Wales has nothing at all of that period, in spite of the fact that it was to Wales that the Irish came to study. Archaeologically we know far more about pre-historic Bronze-age Wales & of course Roman Wales, in the sense of plenty of finds of Roman provenance than we do of post-Roman Wales. The finds begin to pick up again in the medieval period, but that's of no particular Welsh interest, it's just Norman, Angevin, English.

It is true that at the Dissolution of the Welsh monasteries in 1536 Thomas Cromwell's agent worked with appalling thoroughness. Every nook & cranny not only in the monasteries but the shrines & parish churches were, despoiled of ~~[illegible]~~ everything. Cromwell's agent writing from a place on the border where a vast dump has been made of the spoil, asked to be excused from forwarding the stuff to London by waggons as it was far too vast.. That is in our preserved state archives. So we shall never know what happened to that dump. whether it was burned or what we do not know & there is no inventory of what it contained.

(10)

area of Wales — the only ~~[illegible]~~ area where any villas are found (except one, near Carmarthen*) yet it was precisely in this south-East corner of ~~W~~Wales that this monastic business appears to have been ~~[illegible]~~ in the beginning the most influential. I give it up. I've written to Welsh archaeological scholars about the absence of 'sub-romanity', i.e., stone building etc. but can get no satisfactory explanation. I don't think we shall ever know. It's like trying to know about what African tribes in, I don't know, the ~~B~~ Congo or Rhodesia or somewhere really are like, how much or how little 'colonisation' etc has affected them, or in precisely what way. Oh dear, now I've written another long meandering bloody letter to no purpose. I only wanted to thank you for sending the Chute correspondence & to send my love to Siobhán* & Rosalind & you.

About what you say of the bastard Elizabethans & Ireland, that would mean another letter twice as long as ~~this~~ bugger. They may not have made martyrs because of the Catholic faith, but by Christ, they ~~they~~ & those sods of Cromwellians, finished off the last coherent Celtic Culture. The driving of the native Irish into Connacht, the attitude of that sod Spencer with his bloody Faery Queene makes me speechless. That little book, No. 6 of the same series as the de Paor work, called the Celts (by Powell of Liverpool University, trained at Cambridge — not a Welshman I think) is awfully good about in a short terse paragraph that. I can't find the book in the muddle of this room. But that Broadcast I made called The Dying Gaul, was ~~[illegible]~~ made as a kind of comment (certainly not a review) of it. I think the bloody ~~awfully~~ awfulness of that dictatorial attitude of the Irish Clergy to-day derives ~~[illegible]~~ largely from that appalling period. For they were the only chaps who could read, write or speak in any way among the native Irish during those epochs, & have never recovered from being in that position. Or do you think this is rubbish? But as I see it the Elizabethan policy was practically genocidal as far as the real Irish were concerned. St Columba almost exactly a thousand years before 'the Flight of the Earls', at a synod in Ulster, by his authority, saved the bardic schools which retained the oral tradition of Ireland from being closed down (as ~~[illegible]~~ other of his Xtian ecclesiastical mates thought should be done) & by so doing Columba saved the Goidelic tradition for another thousand years. Soon after, the stuff was written down, so we have it still. But the actual structure of that Goidelic-speaking society was destroyed by the Elizabethans & then the plantation in Ulster of Protestant Scotsmen under the Stuarts & then the Cromwellian thing. Interesting that you should have been reading Robert Burns for the first time. I did so only a year ago — not at all thoroughly — but enough to wholly agree with you that it's the strangest mixture of jolly good short things & bloody awful long things. The girl who lent me his works is I suppose only about 33, yet her great-great-grandfather was "out with the '45" — she was born when her father was quite an old man — & each generation back were long livers. Much love Dai.

* probably because Carmarthen was a biggish Roman fort & the solitary villa would have had a measure of protection — that's of a guess,

* Yes, I see, Siobhán as pronounced Xeehān is getting ~~[illegible]~~ near the Middle-Welsh Siwân for Joanna.